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Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia

People not working, or working less than they prefer, including whether they want to work, are looking for work, and factors for them to start working

Reference period March 2024

Released 7/08/2024

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Key statistics

In March quarter 2024:

- 1.3 million people (aged 18-75) without a (paid) job wanted a job, with 1.1 million available to start within 4 weeks
- The most common reason women who wanted a job were unavailable to start within 4 weeks was 'Caring for children', while for men it was 'Long-term health condition or disability'
- 2.1 million people without a job did not want a job, with a further 3.4 million either retired or permanently unable to work
- The main reason for not wanting a job was 'No need, satisfied with current arrangements' (41%)

This release is published on a quarterly basis, with quarterly data published for the September, December and March quarters, and a combined June quarter and annual financial year release.

People who did not have a job

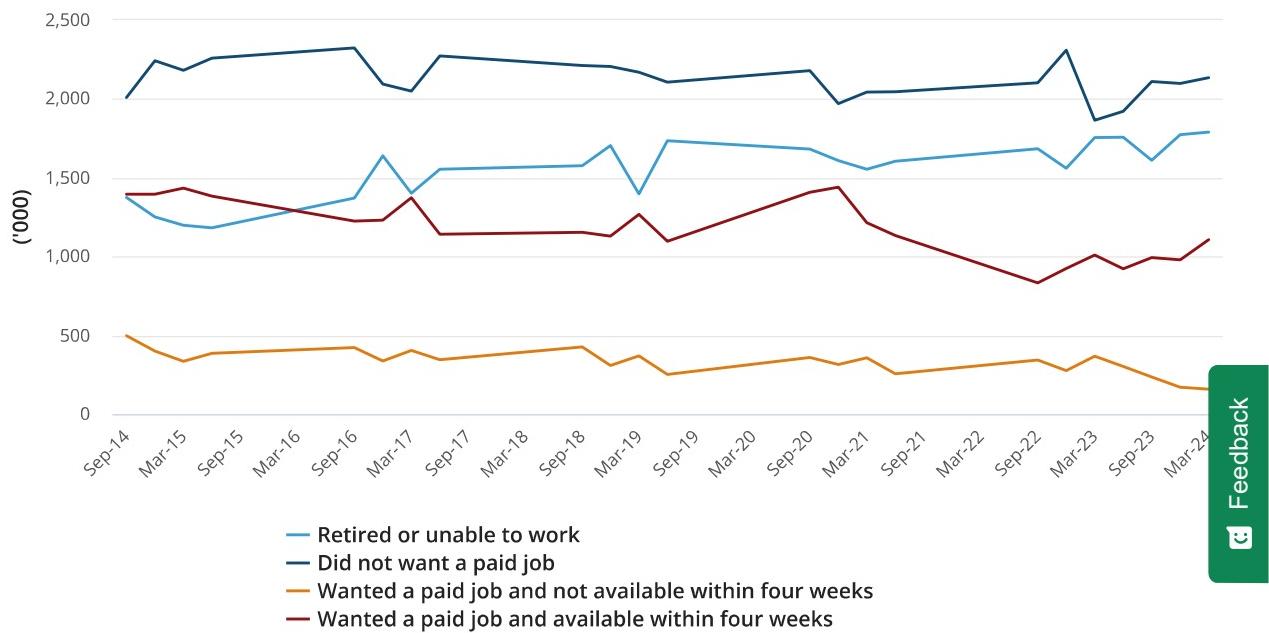
In March quarter 2024, there were 19 million people aged 18-75 years. Of these:

- 13.7 million were employed or had a job to start or return to (73%)

- 1.8 million were retired or permanently unable to work (9%)
- 3.4 million did not have a (paid) job (18%) - 1.3 million people wanted a (paid) job (37%) and 2.1 million people did not want a (paid) job (63%).

Of the 1.3 million people who wanted a job, 1.1 million (88%) were available within 4 weeks and 157,600 (12%) were not available within 4 weeks, down from 366,900 in March 2023.

Graph 1 - People who did not have a job (aged 18-75)



Note: The survey was only conducted every second year prior to 2022-23.

In March quarter 2024, of those aged 18-75 years who did not have a job, were not retired and not permanently unable to work:

- 2.0 million people had a long-term health condition, and of these, 747,700 (37%) wanted a paid job, up from 31% in December 2023
- 1.3 million people had a disability, with 493,200 of these people wanting a paid job (37%).

Note that people can report having both a long-term health condition and a disability.

People who did not want to work

Of the 2.1 million people aged 18-75 years who did not want a job in March 2024, the main reason for not wanting a job was 'No need, satisfied with current arrangements' (41%). 'Studying or returning to studies' was the main reason for not wanting a job for both men and women aged 18-24 years (64%).

For women aged 25-39 years, 'Caring for children' (64%) was the main reason for not wanting a job, up from 54% in December 2023. For women aged 40-54 years it was also 'Caring for children', although in December 2023 the main

reason was 'Long-term health condition or disability'.

For men aged 25-39 years, the main reason for not wanting a job was 'Studying or returning to studies' (39%). In the previous quarter it was 'Long-term health condition or disability'.

For men aged 40-54 years, 'Long-term health condition or disability' remained the main reason for not wanting a job (48%).

People who were not available to work

The reasons people who want to work are not available are similar to the reasons people don't want to work. The main reasons women who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks were:

- Caring for children (41%)
- Long-term health condition or disability (12%)
- Caring for ill, disabled or elderly (9%).

The main reasons men who wanted a job were not available within 4 weeks were:

- Long-term health condition or disability (26%)
- Caring for children (4%).

Incentives to work

Of the 3.4 million people who did not have a job in March quarter 2024, the most important factor associated with either returning to or commencing work was 'finding a job that matches skills and experience', which was rated as 'Very important' by 30% of people.



For people with a long-term health condition, the most important factors were 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience' and 'Ability to work part-time hours' (both 27%).

For people with a disability, the most important factor was 'Finding a job that matches skills and experience' (29%).

Data downloads

Quarterly time series

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Table Q1. Participation status

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Table Q2. Whether wanted a job or more hours

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Table Q3. Unavailable workers and job seekers

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Table Q4. Reasons not looking for work or more hours

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[6.32 MB]

Table Q5. Difficulties finding work or more hours

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[4.21 MB]

Table Q6. Reasons for not wanting to work or more hours

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Table Q7. Incentives to participate

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[3.16 MB]

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6239.0.

Methodology

[Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia methodology, March 2024](#)